

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 /062 W

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P R 011720Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6866

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1679

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NU

SUBJECT: HONDURAN DELEGATION VISITS GUATEMALA

REF GUATEMALA 2169

1. THE SAME HIGH LEVEL HONDURAN DELEGATION AS REPORTED REFTEL VISITED MANAGUA APRIL 25, CONFERRING WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA AND TALKING TO LOCAL PRESS DURING THEIR BRIEF STAY. DELEGATION WAS MET AT AIRPORT BY FOREIGN MINISTER MONTIEL AND DEFENSE MINISTER SANCHEZ. ALTHOUGH THEY WERE ONLY ABLE TO SPEAK WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA FOR ABOUT A HALF-HOUR IN THE MORNING BEFORE HE HAD TO ATTEND A PUBLIC CEREMONY (TO WHICH HE INVITED THE HONDURANS) THEY MET FOR LUNCH AND FURTHER TALKS IN THE AFTERNOON.

2. IN A PRESS INTERVIEW IN SOMOZA-OWNED NOVEDADES, HONDURAN FOREIGN MINISTER GALVEZ SAID THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS INFORMATIONAL, THAT A PRIOR VISIT HAD BEEN MADE TO GUATEMALA, AND THAT CALLS WILL BE MADE ON COSTA RICA AND PANAMA EARLY NEXT WEEK. HE VIGOROUSLY DENIED THAT LOPEZ ARELLANO'S OUSTER CONSTITUTED A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT UNDER THE RULES OF THE GAME AS PLAYED IN
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HONDURAS AND REFUSED TO COMMENT ON LOPEZ' CASE PENDING THE

RETURN OF THE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE FROM WASHINGTON. GALVEZ STATED THAT HIS FAILURE TO VISIT EL SALVADOR DID NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THE STATUS QUO WAS FROZEN AND THAT HONDURAS WOULD CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR A PACIFIC SOLUTION.

3. THE GON HAS NOT YET PUBLICLY COMMENTED ON THE VISIT, BUT VICE FOREIGN MINISTER HARRY BODAN TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 28 THAT THE GON WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE HONDURAN VISITORS' CONSTANT THEME OF CONTINUITY. PRESIDENT SOMOZA AND RANKING NATIONAL GUARD OFFICERS KNOW MELGAR AND MOST OF THE NEW CABINET RATHER WELL AND ARE NOT ALARMED. SOME OF THE MORE JUNIOR OFFICERS MAYBE LESS WELL KNOWN, AND RE POPULIST THAN THEIR SENIORS, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY REPRESENTED A DISTINCTLY MINORITY TENDENCY.

4. BOTH LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE EMBASSY CONTACTS WERE SPURRED BY THE HONDURANS' VISIT TO COMMENT ABOUT THEIR CONCERN OVER THE CONTINUED CLOSE MONITORING OF THE HONDURAN BORDER IN LIGHT OF THE GUERRILLA THREAT IN THE NORTH. WHILE THEIR REACTIONS TO THE EVENT DIFFERED THEY ALSO INTERPRETED THE FALL OF LOPEZ, WHO HAD A COMPADRE RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMOZA, AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW TO SOMOZA AND, POINTING TO THE BORDER QUESTION AND THE PRESENCE OF HONDURAN TROOPS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE, PERHAPS A SUBSTANTIVE SETBACK AS WELL. APPREHENSIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF "PERUVIAN" TENDENCIES AMONG YOUNGER HONDURAN OFFICERS ARE ALSO PRESENT IN PRIVATE POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS.

5. COMMENT: WHILE SOMOZA HAS JUST CAUSE TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT SUDDEN CHANGES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES HE WAS PROBABLY NOT AS COMMITTED TO LOPEZ AS POPULARLY BELIEVED. SOMOZA HAS BEEN HARSHLY CRITICAL OF LOPEZ IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AMBASSADOR FOR SOME MONTHS AND LOPEZ' EVENTUAL DOWNFALL HAD SEEMED INEVITABLE TO HIM EVEN BEFORE THE UB SCANDAL.
SHELTON

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